

Good Morning,

My name is Je Donna Dinges and I am a concerned citizen of Detroit. I am here today because I have had enough! It is spring break for my daughter but I had to interrupt it, because this legislative body decided to hold hearings on bills that would deteriorate the quality of life of Michigan citizens. I am referring to House Bills 5143, 5153 and their companion bills, 5142 and 5548. These bills do nothing more than expand the rights of gun owners to use deadly force, becoming street vigilantes, all the while tying the hands of law enforcement. Why are we even discussing these bills? We have so many major concerns in Michigan - Instead of working to increase jobs in Michigan, or working to improve our schools, or working to ensure Michigan's working families have affordable health care, and a better quality of life this legislative body is discussing these bills?

There is no crisis going on here. No one's going to jail for rightfully using self-defense. No one is going bankrupt by defending a lawsuit for shooting an intruder.

I am extremely concerned that House Bills 5143 and 5153 will open the door for people to misuse the right of self-defense for their advantage. I have so many questions.

The fact that House Bills 5143 and 5153 extends the right to use deadly force in a public place worries me for the innocent bystanders. The bills give the shooter criminal and civil immunity.

Does that mean an innocent bystander cannot sue the shooter? If this is so, how is that fair?

Are you going to allow someone to shoot in a public place without regard to the fact that children may be injured or killed and then the shooter doesn't get punished?

Why would you tie the hands of law enforcement and prohibit them to make an arrest?

Why should we allow the taking of someone's life over material possessions, or an easily reconcilable miscommunication? Why should we allow people to shoot and kill, if they can retreat to safety? And why, I ask, would we give those hasty shooters protection from criminal responsibility? As parents, we work hard to instill in our children that they should resolve conflicts with words, not fists, or in this day and age – guns. But these bills basically say you are a coward for walking away and instead, you should stand your ground and shoot. These bills contradict everything that our parents and grandparents taught us about conflict resolution, and everything we are teaching our own children, frankly these bills promote violence!

Finally I am disturbed that these bills are being considered at all, because they have serious racial undertones. Michigan is one of the most segregated states in the nation, and how are these bills going to help make our race relations any better? They will only be a catalyst for a trigger-happy society, fueled by ignorant beliefs and slanderous stereotypes. Our communities would be better served by attacking the destructive stereotypes that foster the mind-set of needing such irresponsible and permissive gun legislation.

I urge you to not even take these bills out of committee and let them die right here. Please vote no on House Bills 5142, 5143, 5153 and 5548.

Thank you.

Je Donna Dinges
4471 Bishop Rd.
Detroit, MI 48224